

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0030

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

SECRET NEW DELHI 3024

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, IN, US

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH MINISTER OF DEFENSE

1. WITH NO OBJECT OTHER THAN KEEPING IN TOUCH I CALLED SATURDAY MORNING ON DEFENSE MINISTER JAGJIVAN RAM, WHO WAS EXCEPTIONALLY CORDIAL, BUT THEN TENDS TO BE SUCH. HE BEGAN BY ASKING IF I DID NOT AGREE THAT THE AVERAGE INDIAN HAS A GREAT FONDNESS FOR THE UNITED STATES. I REPLIED THAT I ASSUMED THIS IS TRUE BECAUSE IT IS TRUE OF AVERAGE PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. HOWEVER I DO NOT MEET AVERAGE INDIANS, BUT ONLY INDIANS WHO SPEAK ENGLISH, AND THESE INDIANS ARE EDUCATED TO DISLIKE THE UNITED STATES, SOMETIMES WITH GREAT INTENSITY. I SAID I ASSUMED THAT THIS KIND OF EDUCATION WOULD CONTINUE FOR A GENERATION AND WOULD BE A CENTRAL FACT OF INDIAN POLITICS FOR A HALF CENTURY OR SO. HE DID NOT DISAGREE, MUMBLING ABOUT STUDENTS WHO THINK THEY ARE MARXISTS, DISSOCIATING HIMSELF FROM THE WHOLE BUSINESS. HE IS, AFTER ALL, A HARIJAN.

2. HE SPOKE OF THE GREAT IMPRESSION THE RUPEE AGREEMENT HAD MADE ON THE GOVERNMENT. I SAID HOW PLEASED WE WERE THAT OUR NATIONS ARE ONCE AGAIN EXCHANGING OFFICERS FOR

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TRAINING COURSES. WITH TEN INDIANS IN THE UNITED STATES AND TWO AMERICANS HERE. I SAID WE WERE NOT, AFTER ALL, ENEMIES,

AND OUR ARMED FORCES SHOULD STAY IN TOUCH. HE AGREED, ADDING THAT THERE WAS MUCH ASSISTANCE THE AMERICAN ARMED FORCES COULD GIVE INDIA. I TOLD OF MY TRIP TO ISLAMABAD AND HEARING THE MIRROR IMAGE OF INDIAN CHARGES, E.G. THAT AMERICAN HAD GIVEN INDIA THE ARMS WITH WHICH IT INVADED EAST BENGAL AND DISMEMBERED PAKISTAN. AND FURTHER THAT THE UNITED STATES CONTINUES TO ARM INDIA, AS IN PROVIDING THE PEACE INDIGO PROJECT, AN OFFENSIVE RADAR SYSTEM AIMED AGAINST PAKISTAN. OBVIOUSLY, I CONCLUDED, TOO MUCH INVOLVEMENT IN OTHER PEOPLE'S MILITARY AFFAIRS ONLY LEADS TO SORROW, BUT THERE WAS INDEED A DECENT LEVEL OF EXCHANGE THAT SHOULD BE KEPT UP.

3. I REPORTED THAT THE SECRETARY WOULD BE COMING TO DELHI SOON, PERHAPS IN LATE MARCH. HE RECALLED SEEING HIM IN 1970 WHEN HE HAD SAT JUST WHERE I WAS SITTING. I RECALLED THAT HIS CAR HAD BEEN STONED. I SURMISED THAT ONE OF THE RESULTS OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT WOULD BE A JOINT COMMISSION AT THE FOREIGN MINISTER LEVEL, WITH SUBCOMMITTEES ON VARIOUS SPECIFIC TOPICS. THIS WAS AMBASSADOR KAUL'S IDEA. RAM NOTED THAT KAUL HAD GONE OVER IT WITH HIM ON HIS LAST VISIT TO DELHI. I SUGGESTED THAT PERHAPS A SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY MATTERS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED. HE SAID IT CERTAINLY SHOULD BE CONSIDERED. HE MUCH LOOKED FORWARD TO SEEING THE SECRETARY AGAIN.

4. WE SPOKE OF POVERTY, OF THE TRAVAIL WITH WHICH HE PRESIDED OVER A DEFENSE BUDGET ABSORBING MONIES NEEDED BY THE POOR. I SPOKE OF OIL. WE AGREED: IT MEANT DISASTER FOR THE INDIAN POOR. THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES HE SAID, HAD A RESPONSIBILITY TO HELP THE UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES. I AGREED, BUT SAID THAT INDIA WAS NOT A UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRY, BUT ONLY A POOR COUNTRY. THAT ITS SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS WERE CAPABLE OF ANYTHING, BUT THEY HAD BEEN DEALT THIS CRUEL BLOW BY SUPPOSED FRIENDS. HE SAID INDIA WOULD NEED HELP RAISING THE CAPITAL NEEDED FOR OFFSHORE OIL EXPLORATION. I SAID INDIA HAS TURNED DOWN GOOD OFFERS IN THE 1960S FROM COMPANIES WHICH HAVE NOW GOVED TO THE SOVIET UNION, BUT IT WAS NOT TOO LATE AND THE

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ADMINISTRATION WOULD DO EVERYTHING IT COULD TO HELP.

5. AS I LEFT HE REMARKED THAT THE IMPROVEMENT OF INDO-AMERICAN RELATIONS NOW SO EVIDENT, WOULD HAVE GREAT EFFECT ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN GENERAL. HE SEEMED TO THINK I WOULD SENSE THAT HE INTENDED THIS TO BE AN IMPORTANT REMARK.

6. COMMENT: THE EDITORIAL PAGE OF THIS MORNING'S NATIONAL HERALD (THE NEHRU FAMILY PAPER) HAS A LONG ARTICLE ON "US AIMS IN INDIAN OCEAN." I FEAR IT DOES SOME DAMAGE TO

DEPUTY DIRECTOR ZURHELLEN'S CASE AS PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS. TO WIT, IF THE DIEGO GARCIA HIGH JINKS WERE NOT SEEN "AS BEING COMPETITIVE WITH THOSE OF THE SOVIET UNION IN THE AREA". THEN OBVIOUSLY THEY ARE DIRECTED AGAINST THE LITTORAL NATIONS IN THE CLASSIC MANNER OF BRITISH IMPERIALISM. FAIR POINT. (ANYONE WANT TO ANSWER THAT ONE FOR US?

ON SECOND THOUGHT, DON'T TROUBLE. WE RATHER PREFER BEING LEFT OUT OF THE ARGUMENT.) WHATEVER HIS VIEWS ON THIS MATTER, RAM DID NOT INDULGE THEM IN THE COURSE OF OUR TALK.

MOYNIHAN

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